

# Westwood Police Are Driving Green



By Robert Hoffmann  
Westwood Borough Administrator



According to Westwood Chief of Police Frank Regino, "The decision to try the hybrid was and is an easy one."

**Y**ou've seen the headlines: Hybrids work! Hybrids save money! Hybrids save fuel and Hybrids reduce pollution! But you wonder, do they really?

For the last two years, the City of New York has been using Ford Escape Hybrids as taxicabs. That is one of the toughest tests in the country. The hybrids are surviving and prospering. Cabbies make more money per shift driving hybrids because they use less fuel. As of November 28, over 200 Ford Escape Hybrid taxicabs have reached the 120,000-mile mark and are still going strong.

The Borough of Westwood and Ogden City, Utah, have taken the bold step of proving that hybrids can be used by Police Departments on patrol without problems. Naysayers declare that it costs more to repair a hybrid than a regular car. That may be true; however, the cost in fuel savings more than offsets the cost of repairs for the vehicle.

The Borough of Westwood is the first municipality on the East Coast and the second in the United States to use a hybrid vehicle on patrol for its Police Department. From an economic and environmental perspective, in a

community that is fully developed, a hybrid Police vehicle makes sense and saves money. Westwood is just such a mature and fully developed community.

**WITH GAS PRICES AT \$2.65 PER GALLON,  
THE FORD ESCAPE HYBRID ON PATROL WILL  
PAY FOR ITSELF IN FIFTEEN MONTHS.**

The New Jersey Attorney General has issued extremely strict guidelines on Police pursuits. There are exceptions based on circumstances, but such high-speed chases are not an issue in Westwood, which has its share of traffic.

All of the traditional vehicles in the Borough of Westwood's Police Department average 8 miles per gallon (mpg). On patrol, the Crown Victoria, which makes up the majority of the Borough's Police vehicles, averages 6 mpg. The new Dodge Charger, which is supposed to be fuel efficient with its eight-cylinder engine that runs primarily on four cylinders and supplies additional power when needed, is averaging 8.3 mpg.

The hybrid uses no fuel when stopped or driving at speeds under 25 mph. A nickel-metal hydride battery acts as a secondary engine, supplementing the traditional gasoline engine. The battery is recharged through a transfer of energy from braking, known as "regenerative braking."

What drove the Borough of Westwood to buck tradition and incorporate a hybrid vehicle into its fleet? In the spring of 2007, economists were predicting that fuel prices would hit \$4.00 per gallon in the summer. If gasoline prices had reached \$4.00 a gallon on July 4th and stayed there, the Borough of Westwood would have exhausted money in the Police Department fuel budget on August 22. Luckily, fuel prices did not reach that level, but when looking at the growing worldwide demand for oil, it's only a matter of time. Mayor Thomas Warner, Council President Jay Sciara and Councilmembers Gary Conkling, Gail Frasco, Peter Grefrath, William Phayre and Cindy Waneck recognized the imminent possibility of crude oil reaching \$100 per barrel and the price of gasoline rising to \$4.00 per gallon, and unanimously approved the recommendation to purchase a Ford Escape Hybrid for Police patrol.

The borough's 2008 Ford Escape Hybrid Police vehicle was delivered in October and placed in service on October 25th. The hybrid immediately registered 20 mpg. On October 15th the borough paid \$2.40 a gallon for unleaded gasoline. With the hybrid, Westwood immediately saved 14 gallons of fuel per 12-hour shift. At \$2.40 per gallon, that equates to \$33.60 per shift, \$67.20 per day, \$403.20 per week and \$20,996.50 per year!

It should be noted that the hybrid is used six days per week and rested for one day.

On November 21 the borough paid \$2.65 a gallon for its bulk gasoline drop. At 20 mpg, that means the borough is now saving \$37.10 per shift, \$74.20 per day, \$445.20 per week and \$23,150.40 per year. The borough paid just under \$29,000 for the hybrid. With gas prices at \$2.65 per gallon, the Ford Escape Hybrid on patrol will pay for itself in fifteen months.

Police Chief Frank Regino, a resident and taxpayer of the borough,

deserves credit for his progressive outlook. He has stated, "It is my responsibility to continually seek innovative and cost-effective ways to operate our Police Department. In doing so I must remain sensitive to the effect that our operation has on our taxpayers. Fuel costs are now approaching \$3.00 a gallon. Our Police Department consumes over 300 gallons of fuel per week. The decision to try the hybrid was and is an easy one."

reporter to Westwood to file a story about our hybrid. The reporter, Sean Adams, was taken for a ride in the vehicle. He filed a series of reports about the hybrid, which can be found under the archive section of their website: [www.newsradio880.com](http://www.newsradio880.com). After hearing the series of reports on News Radio 880, many Westwood residents have stopped borough officials to tell them how pleased they are that Westwood has purchased

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Two Police Officers have been assigned to use the hybrid on patrol. Officer Matt McClutchy is the largest officer in our department. He is 6'3" 245 lbs. The other officer is James Quaglino. Both officers report that the vehicle is very comfortable to operate. They have been surprised as to how little fuel it consumes on a 12-hour tour. Officer McClutchy stated that he put 1.9 gallons of fuel in the tank after one of his recent 12-hour shifts. He drove the vehicle 55 miles during that shift, which equates to 28.9 mpg. We look forward to being able to report in the future that this increase of miles per gallon has become the standard and is not an aberration.

Officer Quaglino is very pleased with the maneuverability and turning radius of the hybrid. He has had to study up on hybrid technology. Many local high school and college students have stopped him to ask about the hybrid technology. One of Officer Quaglino's children asked about the hybrid's "regenerative braking" system. Officer Quaglino went to the Ford website for the answer. He also reports that the hybrid does not scare the deer at night. Since there is no noise from the engine, the deer just hear the sound of the tires rolling along the ground and look up. They don't get startled and run.

One of the largest radio stations in the New York metropolitan area, WCBS News Radio 880, sent a

this new patrol vehicle. Our Police Officers report that residents are flagging them down to look at the hybrid and talk about it. In addition to its fuel savings, the hybrid has become a public relations tool that helps our Police Department break down barriers and interact with our residents in a positive way.

Westwood is a laboratory of innovation in local government. We are using technology to help us hold the line on taxes and spending while serving and protecting the health, welfare and safety of our residents. There are 566 municipalities in the State of New Jersey with over 550 Police Departments in the state. If each department purchased one hybrid and averaged 20 miles per gallon with that vehicle based on \$2.40 per gallon, the taxpayers of New Jersey would save \$11,000,000. There would also be a dramatic reduction in hydrocarbon emissions into New Jersey's air. The other benefits are less respiratory illnesses such as asthma; bluer skies; cleaner water; and less noise. (hybrids make no noise when running on their battery power.)

Westwood invites its sister municipalities to join us in our efforts to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, save New Jersey taxpayers money, reduce respiratory diseases and decrease air and water pollution. Working together, local government will be able to create cleaner, greener and safer communities! ▲